



School District of Osceola

Mark Luebker, Superintendent of Schools
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Board of Education
Timm Johnson, President
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Rosanna Anderson, Treasurer
Pete Kammerud, Clerk
Brooke Kulzer, Director

May 21, 2018

Blue Ribbon Commission Members:

Our system of support for education from the state has changed. Many schools have, are, or will be asking for more local support. As of 2016, over 68% of Wisconsin schools have gone to override referendums to support the general budget. Since April 2017, there have been 73 override questions asked by Districts. The Osceola School District asked local taxpayers to support a levy override that would put District funding levels back to what we received in 2010-11. Unfortunately, the referendum failed. The District reduced 6 FTE teaching positions and deferred needed maintenance and transportation needs. The District has surveyed the community to get feedback regarding levy override and bond referendum questions for November, 2018.

Until 2011, the State of Wisconsin would allow school districts to increase their revenue at the same rate of the cost of living. In 2011, Wisconsin schools experienced a reduction in their revenue limit authority. The state imposed revenue limit makes up nearly 88% of the District's total budget. Osceola's reduction of state revenue in 2011 was \$946,201. Since 2012 there have been limited, if any, increases to the revenue limit; \$0 in 2015 and \$0 in 2016.

The increase in per pupil categorical aid did assist with our budget shortfall. We were cautious to not use the funding for recurring expenses. My concern lies that this is the new norm and Districts will not see base building revenue limit increases. Over the past 7 years, the state cost of living increase was 13.55%, however the District's state imposed revenue limit has only increased by .2% or \$49,973. During this time the Board of Education has acted to reduce and slow the rate of rising expenses in an environment of limited revenue growth. I encourage you to also consider funding the state imposed revenue limit as it was designed. Please consider per pupil increases on a cost per living increase. The demographics and population trends in our state have changed. Sixty-one percent of all public school districts in Wisconsin are experiencing declining enrollment. Osceola is currently experiencing declining enrollment and could benefit with changes/expansions of hold harmless provisions, more flexible rolling averages or other possible relief measures.

Home of the
Chieftains

Osceola High School – 1111 Oak Ridge Drive – 715-294-2127
Osceola Middle School – 1029 Oak Ridge Drive – 715-294-4180
Osceola Intermediate School – 949 Education Avenue – 715-294-2800
Osceola Elementary School – 250 Tenth Avenue East – 715-294-3457
Transportation – 501 Simmon Drive – 715-294-3456
www.osceola.k12.wi.us



The Board does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, sex, (including transgender status, change of sex or gender identity), or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability ("Protected Classes") in any of its student program and activities.



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Statewide voucher expansion is having an impact in Osceola. While I support parent choice, I am not certain taxpayers understand how it is being funded. This year Osceola taxpayers paid an additional \$84,122 to support our local qualifying voucher school. The DPI revenue limit data shows an increase of \$42.8 million in tax levy dollars to support vouchers. Please consider additional transparency with funding voucher schools.

As a low spending district, the increase in low spending will be helpful when available, however, we still will fall below the state average in funding. Expedite the increase and make the dollars available to all schools that qualify.

We also strongly support dollars towards school mental health initiatives. \$3 million is a great start. \$30 million would be impactful.

Thank you for listening and serving the citizens of Wisconsin.

Mark Luebker

Superintendent

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